

SuperScript

Volume 13, Issue 3



New Centre for Communication Studies Opens at Mount Royal College

- Dr. Glenn Ruhl, Mount Royal College Chair, MRC Liason

The most advanced communications teaching facility in Canada, the new Centre for Communication Studies at Mount Royal College, "officially" opened on September 14, 2004. Approximately 150 invited guests attended the event held in the Centre's newly-renovated second floor location on the Lincoln Park Campus.

Although the new facility boasts state-of-the-art technology it is—as MRC President Dave Marshall announced, "much more than wires and technology."

"With this new Centre and the faculty we have to use it," Marshall declared to everyone in attendance, "and with the appropriate mandate to exploit both, we are assured of a new generation of communications specialists for an increasingly complex world."

The Centre offers a mix of applied degree, diploma, and certificate programs to over 500 students in broadcasting, electronic publishing, journalism, and technical communication. The \$5-million renovation project allows MRC to take these programs to a new level.

Centre Director, Dr. Hilary Elliott notes, "the new Centre brings students and programs, once spread over several campus locations, together for the first

time." Technical communication students now have access to resource and archival materials, space dedicated to group projects and computer labs containing the most recent editions of software applications, in a single location.

"It is exciting for us to see and represent to business this tremendous new facility," explains Colleen Bradley, Manager for MRC's Career Services.

"The best endorsements were those of past students, who in my mind inspire us to continue to do the best job possible."

STC *SuperScript* Team Lead and Mount Royal graduate in technical communication, Jessie Channey, reflected on how an MRC education prepared her for the world of work. According to Channey, "the new facility allows Mount Royal College to continue its tradition of preparing graduates that are able to assume positions of leadership in the technical communications industry."

Dr. Glenn Ruhl, Chair of the Electronic Publishing and Technical Communication programs, points out that "promoting a career in technical communication and its place in today's communications industry is an on-going challenge."

"All the technology in the world won't help you unless you have a clear picture

of why you are using it in the first place," says Ruhl. "While having the latest tools is exciting, the focus in our programs will remain on teaching students how to think creatively."

"The new Centre, however, will be an enormous help in our efforts to promote technical communication as a career and attract high quality students to enter our programs."

This year's combined intake for technical communication and electronic publishing is a fully enrolled class of 66 students.

See [Page 5](#) for photos of the event.

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INSIDE SUPERSCRIPT

A Word from Our President

- Brian O'Malley, Acting President

As you must now be aware, STC has been engaged in a major transformation initiative for the last year or so. One of the outcomes of that project is a new membership structure. The new structure goes into effect for the 2005 membership year, and includes five membership categories:

Classic Membership: Entitles members to the paper versions of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication* and access to the online versions; full access to the members-only area of the STC Web site. You can select one chapter and one SIG or three SIGs, and join additional chapters for \$10 and additional SIGs for \$5. The cost for Canadian members is \$US145 plus \$15 postage.

E-Membership: Entitles members to the same benefits described above, except they will not receive paper copies of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication*. The cost for all members is \$US135. No, that is not a typo. The apparent premium for paper copies is only \$10 (plus the surcharge because of our location).

Limited Membership: Includes subscriptions to the paper versions of *Intercom* and *Technical Communication* and full access to the members-only area of the STC Web site. There is no membership in STC communities (Chapters or SIGs). The cost for Canadian members is \$US125 plus \$15 postage.

Student Membership: Receives the same benefits as e-members, but as before, does not have voting rights. The cost is \$US50.

Corporate Membership: The costs and benefits are still in review.

A prorated rate structure remains in effect for those who join during various months of the year. For example, those who join in November get 14 months for the price of 12. You can view those rates, and a summary of the new membership classes, at www.stc.org/transformation/article9.asp.

The new membership structure offers members great flexibility to purchase services that meet their needs. The biggest change, of course, is that you no longer need to join your local chapter, or any chapter at all. On the 2005 membership form, you will have to select the communities to which you want to belong. I sincerely hope that you believe your membership in our Chapter is worth \$US145 per year! That seems a small price to pay for the newsletter, jobline, and a variety of professional development events. However, if you choose to not join the Chapter, please be aware of this outcome: you will be considered a non-member when it comes to any Chapter event requiring fees, even though you are a member of the Society. You would continue to receive member rates for Society services, like the annual conference. It is not yet clear what would happen for events that fall between Society and community levels, such as a regional conference.

When you receive your renewal form in November, we will be listed as STC Alberta. That is now the official name of our STC community, approved through our participation as a pilot chapter in the community rechartering process. I'm sure we'll

Continued on page 4.

STC Alberta Chapter Administrative Council 2004-2005

Executive

President

Past Presidents
president@stc-alberta.org

Vice President

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Treasurer

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Secretary

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Past President

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Workshops

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Coffee Nights

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New Heights Seminar

Brian O'Malley
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Get Ready: It's A Hurricane

- Rahel Bailie, Region 7 Director-Sponsor

In a recent conversation with an STC community leader, we discussed the changing face of technical communication and the implication for STC members in his chapter. His particular geographic area has been particularly hard hit, with a number of community members working survival jobs until they can re-enter the technical communication field, or holding onto jobs they'd otherwise have outgrown. Technical writers, he worries, are hunkering down in their cubicles, and he fears that by the time they come up for air, they will no longer have a skill set that has sufficient currency in the marketplace.


To say that the changes in the field of technical communication are of hurricane proportions is not an exaggeration. Our workplaces, our careers, peers in our STC network—if we haven't been affected personally, we have been affected indirectly. Some of us have seen our jobs swept away, others have had work debris dumped on us, and ill-implemented changes often bring huge clean-ups from projects gone awry.

What concerns me is hearing that the response to this flurry of change is to sit tight and keep working. Watching Hurricane Frances, then Ivan, sweep through the Caribbean and across Florida, we watched the CNN reports of people jumping to action: board up the windows to protect the home, then get out of the storm's projected path. It involves a lot of hard work, and a fast response, but the pay-off is to get to safety, and be able to bounce back. When we see the eye of a storm moving toward us, is it in our best interest to sit tight and wait it out? Or should we be hustling to move

our skill sets into a safer zone, one where we'll be able to bounce back once worst of the economic storm has passed?

Economists talk about how—as the jobs we know move around the globe—we must be prepared to "move up the value chain." This means that we need to look at adding more value as strategic contributors. How we can do this is to look up the technical communication profession chain and see what more we can do.

For example: Writers can look at other content development skills that bring more value to the workplace or expand their skill set to usability practices. Editors can look at the localization and internationalization field to see where they could add skills. Marketing communications writing could expand to a broader set of communication products. Departments can learn how to use content management systems to add value to their work. Usability folks can apply their principles to interaction design. Help writers can expand their horizons to interaction design. In other words, we can look for the logical expansion of our skill sets, and for each of us that will be a unique path.

How we move up the professional food chain isn't by staying in our cubicles with our noses to the grindstone. How we protect our careers and our futures is through continual professional development, networking, and life-long learning. We can learn a lot about what we want to do—or even about what we may want to eliminate as a career enhancement—by staying informed about developments in related fields, attending STC meetings to network with our peers (and the peers with whom we'd like to keep company), and by continually gaining and honing new skills. It's the surest way to survive the storms that regularly sweep through the umbrella profession that we call technical communication. 

Administrative Council Positions Still Available

We need volunteers to help fill the following positions on the 2004-2005 Administrative Council. These positions are critical for the chapter to continue to offer its events and services to members.

President: Lead the Chapter, develop your management skills, add an important role to your resume

Vice President: Assist the President and other Council members, learn new management skills, network with others in the profession

Coffee Nights Coordinator: Organize the Chapter's Tuesday coffee nights, network with others, share thoughts and ideas in a casual environment

Competitions Coordinator: Organize the Chapter's annual competitions, coordinate entry and judging, have an opportunity to review your peers' work

Volunteer Coordinator: Assist new volunteers to move into positions matching their skills and interests, track volunteer effort and manage Chapter recognition program, interact with a variety of your peers

In most situations, the volunteer commitment for these positions is minimal while the benefits are numerous, including adding experience with a professional organization to your resume, meeting and networking with other technical communicators, and having a say in the Society at a local level. If you would like more information on any of these positions or would be interested in volunteering in other capacities, contact the Acting President at president@stc-alberta.org.

IABC Canada Conference

energize, advance, excel
IABC Canada Conference 2004

P U S H

| Calgary | November 7 – 9

The PUSH is on!

The Calgary chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) is hosting the 2004 IABC Canada Conference in Calgary from November 7-9, 2004. We would like to invite the members of your association to join us at this exciting event.

The theme for the conference is "PUSH". PUSH is about the every day relationship we experience in both our personal and professional lives. In our professional lives we aspire to create strategies that PUSH the current boundaries, perceptions, or benchmarks. In our personal lives there is a PUSH to balance everything we want to do for ourselves or with family and friends. It's about the PUSH from the world around us or how we PUSH ourselves.

We know you attend conferences to develop new skills, be inspired by riveting speakers, and learn from industry experts. This is what you will find at our conference. We took a national approach when booking speakers in order to ensure all areas of Canadian communication are represented at the conference. The result is a stellar roster of exceptional speakers and workshop leaders. We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Visit our conference Web site at www.iabccanadaconference.ca for more details.

Non-member: Full Conference Rate \$900

Non-member: Day Rate \$375

A Message from the President


Continued from page 2.

That name change requires many additional changes, not the least of which is that we need a new logo. To help us get a handle on all of the fallout, we are seeking a Transformation Coordinator whose responsibilities will be to itemize all of the documents, web pages, templates, etc., that need to be updated, and to manage (not execute) the change process. We're hoping to have the process finished by June. If this temporary position interests you, please contact me.

What does it mean to be a rechartered community? It means that STC Alberta is clear about how we provide value to members. Over the summer we solicited and compiled member input to complete STC's community rechartering template, which included:

- our mission statement
- description of our service area and prospective members
- community goals
- strategies to achieve those goals
- programs and activities to implement the strategies
- a description of how we provide value to the larger STC community and further the Society's goals

Next month, I'll describe this initial blueprint for STC Alberta's future, and it is exactly that: an initial blueprint. To succeed, we will need to continually revise what is essentially our strategic plan, and we will need to strive to ensure our members receive

the value they seek in their STC Alberta membership. I hope we can count on your participation in our new community to help ensure we meet both objectives. We are only as strong as the commitment of our members. 

Calling all STC Alberta Members!

- Kristie Sinclair, Mentorship Coordinator

The Mentorship Program Needs YOU!

The program is looking for both mentors and protégés to band together and make this year the most successful year ever.

The mentorship relationship can range from a single telephone or e-mail conversation to a day of job shadowing to ongoing support and advice.

This is an excellent program that aims to enhance current skill sets as well as broaden networks.

Go online to www.stc-alberta.org and apply today!

Centre for Communication Studies Opening

- Photo by Paul Coates



Leigh Robinson, Electronic Publishing Graduate 2004

- Photo by Paul Coates



Jessie Channey, Technical Communications Graduate 2001

EDMONTON

V

E

N

T

S



- Diane Laverty, Edmonton Liaison

Out and About

Angela Weins is presenting several courses through the Faculty of Extension at the U of A, and Hugh Read is presenting Clear Writing Workshops through NAIT. For more information on either of these programs, contact the respective institutions.

Upcoming Events

Event: First Annual New Heights Seminar - Building Usability into Your Documentation

When: Saturday, November 13

Where: Delta Edmonton Centre

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Cost:	Members	\$110
	Student Members	\$50
	Non-members	\$175

Includes: Lunch

For more information, see the Web page at www.stc-alberta.org/NewHeights/newheights.php

Registration: Register online at www.stc-alberta.org/Edmonton/edmonton.php


Professional Development

This fall, the MacEwan Writing Works will be offering several courses that may be of interest to STC members. For more information, or to register, call 497-5346, or visit the Web site at www.macewan.ca/writingworks

Plain Language for Business WRIT 0100 (570) Learn how to make your writing user-friendly.

Writing for the Web WRIT 0209 (570) Create Web content your audience will want to read.

Production Editing WRIT 0241 (570) Production editing involves different criteria than all other editing functions. Checking graphics and text and their relationships to each other is an essential part of the process.

Writing a Non-Fiction Book WRIT 0244 (571) Do you have an idea for a non-fiction book? Learn where you can find a market for your book in print. 

Upcoming Programs

- Linda Robson, Program Coordinator

We have organized some super programs in the Calgary area for the coming year. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. Our programs cover a range of topics providing technical communicators an opportunity to gain knowledge in a variety of areas. We offer both professional development and a venue for networking with others in the industry.

Programs are regularly held in the Media Room at the McDougall Centre from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Tentative dates for programs are November 18, February 10, March 10, April 14, and May 12. We provide beverages and snacks and offer time for networking and questions following each presentation.

As this goes to press, we are still in the process of negotiating with speakers so stay tuned to the next *SuperScript*.

What kind of programs you ask? This year, we've come up with some broad topics that will be of interest to experienced writers and editors and to those starting out in this field. Some of the topics include:

- everything you need to know about contracts
- the future of technical communication
- hiring trends in the field of technical writing
- project management
- professional speaking/delivery techniques
- copy editing

For more information on programs, feel free to contact program@stc-alberta.org.

"Ascending the Summit: A Technical Communication Expedition"

The STC Intermountain Chapter Announces the 2004 Region 5 Conference October 21-24, 2004 in Salt Lake City!

Our theme, "Ascending the Summit," and this quote from Sir Winston Churchill invite each of us to excel in this technical communication expedition.

"Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb."

STC Intermountain invites you to the Wasatch Mountains! Here, at the foot of the Wasatch Range, we will spend two and a half days ascending the summit-tackling technical communication challenges, renewing both friendships and work relationships, and enriching our skill sets.

In addition to great keynote speakers and a closing session focused on Transformation, you'll have a chance to network, to enrich your career, and to give your heart and mind an invigorating treat to the beauty of Salt Lake City. And don't forget the leadership workshop on Sunday morning to round out the experience, recap your knowledge, and have some informal, intimate discussions with other STC leaders. At last count, four directors of the Society will be there!

See our conference Web site (www.stcregion5conf2004.org) for registration and conference schedule information.

I'm expecting to have fun, and I know you will too! See you there!

Linda L. Oestreich, STC Region 5 Director Sponsor, Manager, Communities Transformation Committee
h:619-546-7772; c:713-304-7793, lloriter@ev1.net

First Annual New Heights Seminar

Building Usability into Your Documentation, Interfaces, and Web Sites

Ginny Redish

STC Fellow, Bethesda, Maryland

Spend the day with internationally recognized expert, trainer and speaker Ginny Redish for an interactive, hands-on workshop on one of the hottest topics in our profession: usability. Topics and practical exercises will benefit practitioners and students at all levels:

- Usability: What is it? Why is it so important?
- What's in the usability professional's toolkit?
- Doing user and task analysis; creating personas; gathering scenarios.
- Setting measurable usability objectives.
- Building usability in: applying research to practice.
- Evaluating your drafts and prototypes.

Our Speaker

In 1979, Ginny founded the Document Design Center at the American Institutes for Research in Washington, DC, which she directed for 13 years. There, she and her colleagues studied the problems that people have with workplace documents and helped major companies and government agencies develop model print and online documents.

In 1985, Ginny set up one of the first independent usability test laboratories in North America where she and her colleagues had users come to try out interfaces and documentation for clients including Hewlett-Packard, IBM, SAP, and Sony. Since 1992, Ginny has been working with private companies and government agencies as a consultant in usability and documentation. Most of her work today is helping clients make information-rich Web sites and Web applications meet both business goals and users' needs.

Ginny helps companies and agencies bring user-centered design into their processes. She greatly enjoys mentoring people who want to learn more about how to make products and processes work for people and how to communicate clearly. Ginny is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College and has a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Harvard University.

The Details

Calgary:	Friday, November 12, 8:30 a.m - 4:00 p.m. Delta Bow Valley
Edmonton:	Saturday, November 13, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Delta Edmonton Centre
Cost:	Members \$110 Student Members \$50 Non-members \$175
Includes:	Lunch
Registration:	See the Chapter Web site





Mark Your Calendars!

Programs and Administrative Meetings

Attend programs to discover the ideas and technologies that affect today's technical communicators.

Location: McDougall Centre
455-6 Street SW, Calgary

Time: Third Thursday of the month
Meeting: 5:45 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.
Program: 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Registration for the program begins at 7:00 p.m.

Registration: **Required.** Registration is required to attend the program. Register by the Monday prior to the program.

Fee: Members \$5.00
Student Members Free
Non-members 10.00
The fee is for the program portion only.

Workshops

Attend workshops to gain in-depth knowledge and skill through instruction and hands-on activities.

Location: Mount Royal College (Room E141)
4825 Richard Road SW, Calgary
Please bring \$8.00 in change for the parking meters at Mount Royal College.

Time: Scheduled Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Registration: **Required.** Register at least 10 days prior to the workshop.
Registration must be cancelled one week in advance of the workshop or the registrant will be billed for workshop fees.

Fee: Members \$50.00
Student Members 25.00
Non-members 110.00

Coffee Nights

Attend coffee nights to meet with your fellow technical communicators and discuss a monthly topic in a casual setting.

Location: Annie's Books (Literary Salon)
912-16 Avenue NW, Calgary
Parking is available behind Tim Hortons.

Time: Third Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Registration: Not required.

Fee: Free for both members and non-members.

October

Thursday, 14 Administrative Meeting - Calgary
5:45 p.m.

Tuesday, 19 Coffee Night - Calgary
7:00 p.m.

November

Friday, 12 New Heights Seminar - Calgary
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, 13 New Heights Seminar - Edmonton
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, 18 Administrative Meeting
5:45 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.
Program - Calgary (topic TBA)
7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Coffee Night at MRC

The October Coffee Night will be held at Mount Royal College on Tuesday, October 19, in room T116.



To register...

...for programs and workshops, use our online registration form at www.stc-alberta.org/Calendar/registration.php.

Note: Due to security policies at McDougall Centre, advance online registration is required for Administrative Meetings and Thursday programs.

SuperScript

Contact the Editors:

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Distribution: *SuperScript* is distributed to members in Alberta and the Northwest Territories, to all Canadian Chapters, Region 7 Chapters of STC, and to interested companies and individuals upon request. Circulation is 230.

Advertising: *SuperScript* accepts advertising of interest to our readership, and which furthers professional development. We reserve the right to limit or refuse advertising.

Rates:

Full page	\$160.00	Quarter page	\$50.00
Half page	\$100.00	Business card	\$20.00

For detailed information on sizes and formats, see www.stc-alberta.org/Newsletter/newsletterAds.php.

To place an advertisement, contact the Editors.